

"Transfiguration," by Raffaele; and the "Last Supper," by Leonardo da Vinci, in pictures. These examples, it was said, testify to a mental or reasoning idealism, combined with a skill in depicting the essence of things material, and should therefore rank far above imitative skill in the abstract. Idealism is yet more severely tasked in connecting the several ideal embodiments into a grand whole, or complete picture, as in the "Last Judgment," by Michelangelo. Art such as this, he said, might be called *high art*; but the qualification ought not to be attached to the works of an ordinary artist, whose vanity leads him to lay a surreptitious claim to take rank under such a banner.

The characteristics of Greek art, it was stated, are quite distinct from the examples last mentioned, although both have received great and well-deserved admiration. The Greeks, however, approached only to a perfect embodiment of physical beauty, without evolving the attributes of the higher powers of mental reasoning; this would arise simply from their progressive refinements being based chiefly on skillful imitation. Art had undoubtedly been extensively encouraged by the Greeks, from the great number of their works; and if, instead of pursuing the *heroic vein*, they had sought to impart a *moral purpose* (expressions to be taken in their broadest sense), then, indeed, would their productions have attained to a truly glorious eminence. It was the reader's opinion that their wonderful skill, when receiving additional purpose and meaning, would have created much nobler works through their embodiment of mental attributes. The frieze of the Parthenon, he contended, while he had the fullest appreciation of its beauties, ought not to be viewed in any other light than as a production in *imitative art*. Nature, he said, had been so faithfully studied and delineated, that very few inaccuracies could be discovered; but he deduced from this and the pervading similarity of features and vacant expression, not only that the *models* must have been of a superior class, but also that the Greek artists had relied upon their powers of imitating objects as they were seen by them.

The reader remarked that there are two distinct kinds of idealism in art,—one addresses the imagination only, and the other goes further, by appealing to the reflective and reasoning faculties. Several examples were then described to shew that *embellishment* had formed the noblest intent and purpose of art in its best periods, and that, while the first artists of the middle ages painted to embellish, we paint to produce pictures.

After some remarks upon Haydon's writings, he submitted the inquiry: What is *high art*? Is it a term to signify something superior in merit? Is it a matter of theory or practice? Can it teach morality or put down vice? Had it a correlative in the sciences, such as high chemistry or high astronomy? He would be glad to learn the proprieties of art from its phraseology, and would continue his attempt in disentangling the subject at the next meeting.

MOVEMENTS OF POPULATIONS IN TOWNS.

It is not uninteresting to speculate on the tendency of towns to extend themselves in certain directions, a tendency resulting either from the favourable character of the position under increase of population, improved modes of commercial intercourse, or the spirit of loaded proprietors and builders. As we have already remarked, nothing has had so great an influence over the movement and settlement of populations as that greatest and most remarkable of modern inventions, the railroad. Not only in the immediate vicinity of large towns are these changes strikingly evident, but in the remotest corners a new existence seems to be created, a new impetus to industry and speculation to be given; and men hitherto lulled to sleep and indifference by the dreary monotony of country life, wake up as it were to new ideas. The gay villa makes its appearance in the distant village, neat, well-garbed shops attract the eyes, the ivy-mantled tower fast crumbling to ruin is repaired, and even the hat of the cottager, as if ashamed of its ancient hues, smiles under a coating of white-wash.

There can be little doubt that if, on the es-

tablishment of a line of railroad, a position remote from the centre of activity be chosen for its terminus, a risk is run of setting up a rival point of activity at a distance from the old, which by its new advantages may be injurious eventually to the others prosperity, and the value of its property generally. The populations will of necessity group themselves around these new centres, and will benefit by the change, not only because they will have at hand such ready means of transit for goods to the most distant parts, but because they will get land at a cheaper rate, houses at lower rent, with the advantages of air and space denied to the mass, who in ancient towns are forced to inhabit dark, unwholesome, crazy buildings, many of which were once tenanted by our better classes.

Nature seems to have pointed out certain situations as better suited for the residence of large multitudes than others. History, again, points out to us in what respect centres of activity have been changed, rendered variable, or been altogether destroyed by the shortsighted regulations of authority, the influence of tyranny, or the avarice of speculators. It does not matter much where great towns ought to have been and might have been; although leaving men free to choose by their own natural instinct, the positions most favourable for the development of their industry would, without doubt, have changed the whole political face of society, and benefited it morally and materially; for every atom of liberty gained through tolerance, however indirect, is a victory to the people in genuine prosperity. It does matter, nevertheless, when great centres of activity have been created or do naturally exist, that they should not be suddenly deranged by new interests or impolitic opposition to progress of any kind, but be allowed to take their fair and legitimate share of the advantages. The introduction, therefore, of improved methods of locomotion, not immediately within their reach, could not fail to be injurious to them, and the application of a remedy to evils once created, is at no time very easy.

On the first attempt to establish a railroad near Paris, considerable opposition was raised to bringing the terminus into the town. The St. Germain Company, impelled by its own interest, naturally sought to obtain a position as central as possible; it was, however, compelled to content itself with its present station in the Rue St. Lazare, instead of being close to the Madeleine. Here it could scarcely be said to be in Paris, inasmuch as, although at some distance within the walls, there was hardly a house to be seen in the vast open plain through which the line now passes. To the south of the town arrives one of the two railroads to Versailles. Instead of being permitted to enter, like its rival, within the walls, so strenuous an opposition was made, that it only approaches them at a very respectful, but most inconvenient distance; and the result has been what might have been anticipated, that the company has failed, and sold its road to its happier competitor. Had the terminus been carried, as was proposed, up to the Pont Neuf, little doubt can be entertained that the utmost degree of prosperity would have followed. Now, however, but not until it had been ruined by its rival, its long-expected continuation to the west of France will be carried out, and then the immense activity that will of necessity be given to it, must necessitate the proposition, and assure the consent of the town authorities in their own interest, to the extension of the line into the interior of the metropolis. In fact, it is clearly evident, that this line must become eventually the principal communication with the west of France, and that when the lines to Lyons and Bordeaux shall have been opened, a junction at Paris will become necessary, and thus the Ocean and the Mediterranean be brought into rapid communication with each other.

The St. Germain Company has foreseen all the immense advantages which its rival to Versailles might have derived, had the line been extended, as it is about to be, to the west. It has become the purchaser of it, and uniting the two under one management, is preparing a junction for them at a place called Viroflay, some six or eight miles from Paris.

The activity with which this company has acquired to itself so many advantages, has ex-

cited no little attention; and some have even carried their provisions so far, as to assert that a great movement is beginning, on the part of the population, towards the part of the town touching upon their lines; and that in contemplation of such a move, of necessity, on the part of the inhabitants, the lands in that direction have been bought up as fast as possible by the interested parties. These apprehensions, of the rising of a new Paris by the side of the old one, are much exaggerated. Great as is the movement in the direction alluded to for the moment, it is not greater than might be expected from the increase of population, and from the natural effect of the earlier termination of the lines of the St. Germain Company. When we shall have other lines opened from the east, and the south, and west, we may expect that the vicinity of those lines will display as great activity of change as the first has given proof of.

We have, however, here some half dozen lines united in one; and a junction further proposed of the lines with the great western road; and an attempt made, moreover, to approach and run a cross line into the northern. It results then, that, by reason of the increased facilities accorded by this network of iron, intersecting the west of Paris, having a communication with the sea by Rouen and Havre, on the point of having one with the west of France by the junction at Viroflay, with the prospect of an union with the northern, which is separated from one of its branches by a merely trifling distance, the lands lying within the influence of this network have acquired a value greater generally than those of any other part, and new streets and roads are forming, and buildings rising, with a rapidity almost unequalled.

When, with the advantages of railway communication, with the facility of transporting its productions to various parts of a country, you offer to so industrious population land and houses at a cheap rate, can one be surprised that the offer should be accepted? Paris is becoming every day more and more a manufacturing town; and, as such, will accept with avidity all the facilities which can be presented to it for the transport of its productions. The progress made within comparatively few years is absolutely astonishing, and is not confined to any particular quarter. The fashionable as well as the unfashionable neighbourhoods are invaded by the ateliers of industry, and tall chimneys, vying with each other in elegance and height, rise up beside them, filling the atmosphere with smoke, and rapidly changing the clear skies of Paris to the melancholy hues of our manufacturing towns.

The manufacturer will look only to the facilities for the transport of his fabrics. He will not hesitate, when offered land at one or two francs a square metre on which to build his ateliers, to prefer it to paying such immense prices as it costs in the town, where it rises to even 300, 500, and sometimes 1,000 francs the metre. The buildings, of whatever kind, will be infinitely cheaper of construction, as the materials can be brought immediately by the railroads from the quarries which produce them. From Montonry, freestone of the finest kind; from Nanterre, rough stones of an excellent quality for ordinary constructions; from Argenteuil, the best plaster; and from the north, coals may be transported to their doors, without entering Paris at all. Thus, the heavy impositions exacted at the barriers will be avoided; and, above all, that most excessive annoyance of the barbarous *octroi*—the inspections which every thing must undergo before being allowed to enter, causing delay to business, trouble, vexation, and expense, as well as injury to goods and property exposed to be hauled over by the agents of authority. These are important considerations for the manufacturer, and he will not fail to profit by any change for the better.

Paris is situated within a natural basin, which presents many advantages, and seems to have pointed it out as the site of a great capital. From the island on which its first inhabitants had congregated, it extended itself to the south bank, on which we find the curious remains of Julian's palace and baths, and then to the north bank, where the obsolescence of the middle ages erected some of their fine old hotels. Fashion then led the way westerly, and the Faubourg St. Germain rose. Its glories are now fast passing away; and a new world,—a